

DESERT ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (DACE)



THE MISSION OF DACE IS TO PROVIDE RESIDENTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES WITH THE MEANS, RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES ACHIEVE A SELF SUFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE QUALITY OF LIFE.



Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment

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The Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment (DACE) is a non-profit organization that drives the Desert Communities Empowerment Zone (DCEZ) by focusing its energy to support and find solutions for its communities and partnering organizations. DACE's mission is to provide residents and their communities with the means, resources and opportunities to achieve a quality lifestyle that is self-sufficient and sustainable.

The DCEZ is a geographic area of nearly 4200 square miles. The DCEZ is only one of ten federally designated Rural Empowerment Zones in the United States. The Zone is bounded on the north by the San Bernardino County line, to the south by the Imperial County line, the Coachella Valley to the west, and the Colorado River to the east. The Zone crosses the jurisdictional boundaries of Riverside County; the cities of La Quinta, Indio, Coachella, and Blythe; and five (5) Indian Reservations - Cabazon, Augustine and Twenty-Nine Palms Bands of Mission Indians, the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, and the Colorado River Indian Tribes. The Zone also includes a majority of Joshua Tree National Park as well as the northern portion of the Salton Sea. In addition, the Zone comprises eight (8) primary rural communities of Subzones; these communities are Desert Center, Colorado River-Lost Lake, as well as the USDA designated Colonia communities of Mecca, Thermal, North Shore, Ripley, Mesa Verde, and Oasis.

Facing severe social and economic conditions, in 1998 these rural communities developed a strategic plan to leverage federal funding to promote sustainable economic and community development, thus improving the quality of life for residents within the Empowerment Zone.

Through the strategic planning and community involvement process, DACE has identified fifteen issue areas from which all projects and programs stem. The issue areas are:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Public Safety
- Food/Security/Basic Needs
- Community Facilities
- Child Care
- Environment
- Education
- Health Care
- Economic Development
- Employment Training
- Communications/Information
- Social Services
- Infrastructure
- Recreation

The specific goals for the environment and infrastructure areas are:

Environment - provide residents with environmental education and encourage activities and programs that promote clean air, soil and water.

Infrastructure - development and implementation of plans to provide "back bone" main-line infrastructure systems (i.e. flood control, communications, streets, curbs and gutters, water and wastewater systems).

The intent of the Rural Empowerment Zone Program is to provide up to \$40 million in Federal funds to designated communities to enable them to successfully implement their Strategic Plans. These funds are considered "seed money" to be used to attract, leverage, and infuse substantial resources and funding from Federal, State and private sources.

For additional information, regarding DACE programs and services, please visit www.dcez.org or contact the DACE office.